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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

DD / S REGISTRY

SUBJECT: (Optional)

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FILE

Medical

Youth Survey -- DDS

FROM:

OTR/SIWA
926 C of C

EXTENSION

NO.

DTR-7372

DATE

7 April 1972

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

RECEIVED FORWARDER

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1. Director of Training
1026 C of C

10 Apr 210

AM
JN/TFC

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2.

3. Deputy Director for
Support
TD-26 Headquarters

4/14

4.

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MORI/CDF Pages 3-4 & 6-1

72.1418

7 April 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: John W. Coffey, DDS

SUBJECT : Youth Survey -- DDS

1. I have delayed providing my observations as the DDS representative on the Youth Study Group until a determination had been made on the significance and utilization of our collected findings. While I was at FSI's Foreign Affairs Executive Seminar, events moved with surprising alacrity. Therefore I consider the time appropriate to pass along my own findings and reactions.

2. My findings are based on a small sample -- interviews with ten professionals and two "semi-professionals" (communicators in OC), plus five supervisors. All Offices of the DDS are represented. I have also considered attitudes of DDS professionals drawn from informal contacts during training courses, and my tour as a program officer in CTP (1966-67).

3. Our understanding is that Mr. Colby intends to discuss the initial Working Committee Report with the Deputy Directors. Meanwhile our Committee is preparing recommendations based on our collective findings.

4. The enclosure "DDS Composite Interview Results" is a summary of the interviews on the questionnaire form we used for guidance. This is Appendix C in the Report submitted to Mr. Colby. The second enclosure is my narrative summation, based on explicit responses to the questionnaire and additional interview discussions.

5. I do hope our Committee is able to provide some positive inputs for careful consideration. The project has been a very valuable contribution to increasing my own qualifications as a member of the Management Advisory Group.

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DDS COMPOSITE INTERVIEW RESULTS

Based on interviews with 10 DDS professionals,
average age, 30, average grade, GS-11

- I. Invite interviewee to comment on his job, his career, and the Agency generally. Record key points made in the spaces provided under II.
- II. Secure a response to the following topical areas if they have not been adequately covered as a result of I above.

1. PRESENT JOB

- Interesting, Meaningful?
- Recognition received

Majority of interviewees were "specialists" - technically skilled in fields that narrow flexibility of career development. All seem pleased with specialty of choice - although in two instances, present job lacked challenge (too little work, poor supervision). Thus overall, sample suggests interesting jobs with adequate recognition.

2. AGENCY MISSION

- Ability to identify with
and be committed to Agency
goals and objectives

In no instance was this a problem. Interviewer in each case raised issue from both vantage points - own identity, and that of friends knowing what you do. But neither issue of mission nor image seemed to arouse reaction from anyone queried. Respondents not critically concerned with U.S. Foreign Policy formulation and execution or with world affairs in general. "Mission" often understood in the parochial sense of one's office mission.

3. AGENCY IMAGE

No problems whatsoever. See answer to question 2.

4. PROMOTION POLICY & PROSPECTS; GRADE, SALARY, BENEFITS

Half of interviewees had progressed more rapidly up promotion ladder than even they had anticipated. All were content to date, but most anticipated problems a grade or two distant. Variety of concerns - "office hump" (policy of requiring period in grade regardless of slotting), top heavy grade structure of Agency overall, lack of career development schemes, artificial barrier of lack of college degree. But this fact did not seem to produce noticeable frustration or dissatisfaction with present status.

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5. WORKING CONDITIONS

Working conditions not deemed major area of concern. None saw theirs as insufferable, and most interviewees had rotated enough to take good and bad situations in stride.

6. SUPERVISION (IMMEDIATE)

- Treatment by and
- Competence of Supervisor

In all but one instance, supervisor considered professionally competent. But competence as supervisor varied - from three who said their present supervisor was "best ever" to two describing supervisor as hard worker but unwilling or unable to delegate real responsibility. Some raise more philosophical question of whether Agency may miss boat by insisting often that promotions eventually depend upon supervisory/administrative positions when individuals with special skills would be much more effective sticking to exploiting these skills. (Does raise questions about developing more effective management training - although issue may be founded on other bases, such as supervisor's concern for own job security.)

7. COMMUNICATIONS

- Up-Down-Lateral
- Substantive - Non-Substantive

Most interviewees felt need for better communications. This was true both of those whose concept of "communications" was purely office-oriented (despite my proddings) and those considering broader intra-Agency commo. Concessions made to "need-to-know", and some cited that informal channels (via friends) gave effective overview. But - more common was concern over lack of management/professional commo and no staff meetings. Lack of overview summed up best by one who commented what an eye-opener the "Trends and Highlights" course had been.

8. CAREER DEVELOPMENT/Personnel Mgmt.

- Job Mobility
- Quality & Relevance of Trng.
- Performance Evaluation

Those who had had more than one job generally were pleased with their progression of jobs - each offering either more responsibility, or more variety and new skills. But in no case was there the suggestion of planned career development - similarly, good training or poor, the provision of training did not seem to follow a tailored program of career development. Appraisal of training itself real mixed bag. There was general accord that performance evaluation had been fair - reflecting positive view of immediate supervisors.

9. WAY AGENCY IS RUN - BE SPECIFIC

Interesting mix of reactions - from "top heavy" to "bureaucratic,

but better than most Government organizations," to "growing more responsive to the individual and less concentrated on 'mission.'" Those with most diverse experience in Agency seemed less bothered by "bureaucracy" - did note a paternalism that results in Agency keeping incompetents in responsible posts. None commented critically on compartmentation. Positive note was how many felt that Agency truly becoming more "people-conscious".

10. MISCELLANEOUS

General comments were usually amplifications on specific categories. One interesting suggestion - more precise retirement policy (by inference, at earlier age than present) would result in better career development with supervisors more willing to train those destined to succeed them. Too often, older professionals afraid to delegate responsibility or train juniors for fear that the junior might prove more competent. Rather loose retirement scheme puts little pressure on supervisors - many have job security reinforced by aforementioned paternalism.

III. Concluding Questions:

- What do you see as the major concerns, problems, and issues facing young officers in the Agency today.

First qualification should be note that few in "youth sample" saw selves as youth. Consequently several reflected on "today's youth" as being too spoiled and idealistic - thus problem for virtually any employer! From standpoint of what Agency should do - comments focused on communications. Young officer should be better oriented towards realistic image of Agency mission and his career expectations within that framework...in other words, bring young officer down to earth as quickly as possible. Then-maintain 2-way channels of communication between management and young professionals-a part of this should be efforts at meaningful career development planning.

27 January 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Youth Survey -- DDS

1. Interview Sample -- How Representative?

At least one professional from each DDS office (except the Office of the DDS himself) was interviewed. I believe there was a sufficient pattern in the views of the young professionals and managers to consider this sample representative of non-CT young professionals in the Directorate. (The CT factor is discussed in section four, Career Development.) I say "representative", but then must qualify for the obvious reason that the sample is such a small one. Therefore the conclusions are submitted timidly and tentatively.

Two generalizations provide the context for my conclusions.

First, the sample is not representative of "youth," as perceived by the interviewees themselves and as considered in general usage. (For the sake of comparison, I'm defining "youth" among Agency professionals as under 25, possessing at least the baccalaureate degree, and probably starting their first full-time job. My "youth" impressions are drawn from informal discussions with recent EODs during orientation training.) Eight of the ten interviewees were 30 or over, and seven had five or more years in the Agency. I contrast the attitudes of "youth" (as I defined them) and these young professionals as conceptually comparable to the "first-tour" army man vs. the soldier who has re-enlisted, and in so doing psychologically reinforced his sense of commitment to organization and occupation.

The second generalization is the "specialist" factor - all are committed to their present type of work and, with one exception, to their career service. The exception is a records management officer who felt that this should be a separate career service, as records management skills are utilized by all components. He stated that he now falls between the two career channels in his office - administrator and technical specialist.

2. Agency Mission and Image

No interviewee had difficulty identifying with Agency mission or image. Most had a limited view of the scope of our mission and

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activities. One young professional and one manager commented on their amazement in this regard after the former took the DDS "Trends and Highlights" course and the latter the Mid-Career Executive Development course (after 11 years in the Agency). Public criticism of the Agency as an organization or for its role in Indo-China, Cuba, etc. did not bother any interviewee. Indeed, the reaction of two was that we were too responsive to public opinion, and should be more active operationally. I conclude that the DDS sample is not critically concerned with U.S. foreign policy formulation and execution, or with world affairs in general.

3. Present Jobs and Supervision

Seven interviewees were enthusiastic about their present jobs and recognition received. Two were dissatisfied for lack of challenge, the third for heavy work load. All are content with their job specialty -- dissatisfaction reflects more upon poor supervision and distribution of work. The same generalization can be made of the management sample, with one changing career service to advance himself in his job specialty (data processing). Those critical of their supervisors acknowledged the latter's competence in their specialty -- criticism was directed at their managerial effectiveness. The same conclusion can be drawn from the management sample. These observations underscore my characterization of the DDS as a directorate of technical specialists. The one exception would be OTR, which draws so heavily on rotatees from other directorates for instruction and staff functions.

4. Career Development and Promotions

I noted in the first section that the interviewees viewed career development in terms of their present office, and in terms of continued improvement in application of their present skills. Half of my sample either lacks a baccalaureate or earned theirs after beginning Agency employment. Two others have specialties (scientific linguist, electronic engineer) with limited application. I contrast this sample with the "generalist" concept expounded for CTs in the mid-1960s. The generalist concept never reached the dimensions hoped for, either numerically or in a developmental sense. But I would hypothesize that the significant influx of CTs into the DDS beginning in the 1960s -- CTs with a broader educational base and expanded view of the Agency through their training program - will generate pressures for careers spanning several directorate offices. Three DDS managers commented that even those coming into their office via direct hire were better educated than EODs of their generation and "later" (ill-defined).

These comments are to introduce the concept of "career development" -- a non-existent phenomenon in the DDS. Management and young professional interviewees who have held two or more positions described their rotations as usually welcome but "hit-or-miss" propositions. DDS offices do encourage rotation, but no one could identify a pattern of career development in their movements.

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Most of my sample had been promoted rapidly and appreciated this fact. Similarly, most anticipated a "lump" in the near future -- which they assessed as resulting from one of the following:

a. "Deadwood" in slots. This was attributed to senior Agency officials' paternalism in retaining older officers who were no longer competent. This criticism was implicit in the comments of those describing the Agency as "top-heavy" in grade structure.

b. Promotions based on "paper requirements," not on ability. This could mean required time in grade, set patterns of job experience matching those of managers, requirement of baccalaureate degree regardless of professional competence, or non-competitive promotion policies within career services.

c. Reluctance of managers to give responsibility or on-job-training to young professionals because of their own job insecurity.

Several concluded that a basic problem was the imprecision of Agency retirement programs. If senior professionals were obligated to retire at reaching a set service-age figure (assumption that retirement age would be lowered), they would be more prepared to encourage and train the more competent young professionals.

The role of training in career development got a mixed response. Differing office philosophies are apparent -- most encourage external training (e.g., college courses), but often do not program for Agency training. One manager from O/L said he has had more training in the past two years than in his first 16 years in the Agency. As an ST careerist, I believe this reflects a fundamental Agency problem of relating OTR capabilities to component needs -- a communications gap.

Performance evaluation, and particularly fitness reports, were considered fair by interviewees. Managers viewed them as necessary, good in concept, but too often compromised by the evaluator taking the line of least resistance by grading "down-the-middle." The fitness report as the basic device for performance evaluation was accepted as conceptually the most effective tool to keep manager and professional aware of their relationship.

5. Communications

Most interviewees spoke of the natural barriers of "need-to-know" and compartmentation limiting the forms and content of communications within the Agency. But the consensus was that these alone were not satisfactory explanations for the proliferation of channels and their own ignorance of much of the Agency's functioning and mission. Those in the Agency five years or more agreed that informal communications -- friends in other components -- were the most important means for keeping in touch and often for finding shortcuts for action and/or information

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to fulfill their own responsibilities. Staff meetings too often were purely for highly selective communication downward.

Despite these complaints, the consensus was that communication between manager and professional was improving at most levels -- as noted in the next section.

6. How The Agency Is Run

"The Agency is growing more bureaucratic ... "

"We don't have as much red tape as other Government agencies, but "

"We're top-heavy, providing jobs for old-timers who no longer produce ... "

These were recurring criticisms, and yet a consensus conclusion was a positive one -- the Agency is becoming "more people-conscious, less mission-conscious." Three office chiefs were cited in particular as encouraging this -- Jack Blake (O/L), Lester Bush (now retired)(O/F), and Dr. Tietjen (O/MS). Thus the overview was a hopeful one. But three basic areas of concern were cited as serious and solutions difficult -- rapidly increasing size of the Agency, communications, and "deadwood" blocking career advancement.